A

Funeral Sermon,

Preach'd at the Interment of

Mr. *SAMUEL STEPHENS*,

For ſome time Employ'd in the Work of the Miniſtry, in this CITY.

Who departed this Life the Fifth of *January*, 169$\frac{3}{4}$. in the Twenty eighth Year of his Age.

By *EDMUND CALAMY.*

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1 Pet. 1. 24. *All fleſh is as graſs; and all the glory of man, as the flower of graſs: the graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.*

Pſal. 103. 16. *For the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof ſhall know it no more.*

LONDON,

Printed for *Abraham Chandler*, at the *Chyrurgeons-Arms*, in *Alderſgate-ſtreet*, MDCXCIV.

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By EDMUND CALAMY.

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2992:06

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Printed for Abraham Chandler, at the Chirurgeons-Arms, in Aldersgate-street, MDCXCIV.

TO THE READER.

THou haſt here an awful Providence to draw forth and exercize thy ſolemn Thoughts: A Perſon Young, Strong, Healthful, and of no ordinary Hopefulneſs and Profitiency in what might render him a Light and Bleſſing to and in his Generation; but ſoon cut down by a malignant Fever. I knew him intimately, and greatly valu'd him; and, by my free and frequent Converſation with him, I found him Apprehenſive, Inquiſitive, Receptive of things in their Evidences, Attentive to what was ſaid, Calm and Modeſt, but Pertinent in his Replies; and prone to conſider Seriouſly of Matters. But yet the Concernedneſs of his Soul for Holineſs and Heaven, drench'd in a Scrupulous Temper, did too exorbitantly agitate his Imagination, or Fancy; the ſtrength whereof was his bewail'd Unhappineſs. For though his Conſcience was tender, and his Life blameleſs, and his Induſtry evidently great in the purſuit of Things Eternal; yet was he rarely (if ever) free from urgent Doubts and Fears: yet not diſcernible to any, until related by himſelf unto ſome few; and among theſe, to me; to whom his Reſorts were very frequent, free, and grateful: for his ordinary Converſation was not moroſe, but pleaſant and profitable; though, through Self-diffidence and Suſpicion, he both kept guard, and much reflected on himſelf, rather to Cenſure, than to Exalt himſelf in his own Conceit, or to extort Self-Commendation from Others. He is Dead: Neither was Providence long about this fatal and awakening Work.

Through Providential Conduct, the Author of this Sermon thus entertain'd a great and attentive Auditory, at the Funeral.

Funeral Solemnity of the Deceased. The Composer of this Sermon (*my Dear and Worthy Fellow-Labourer in the Gospel*) *I could copiously Commend, but will not: He is well known to be more prest by me, and others, than forward of himself to make this serious and useful Sermon publick. The First-Fruits of an hopeful Harvest are not the worse for being early, but the better. Young* Timothy, *when deserving it, was Commended even by St.* Paul, *that great Apostle. And Grace, I hope, will keep him safe and humble; and I beg it may do so. But* —Manum de Tabula— *God's Word and Providence have their loud Call, and solemn Errand to us all. Oh! Hear, Prepare, Fulfil, Dispatch, Pray, Wait and Hope! The Judge is at the Door; the End of all Things is at hand; we little know when, how near, or how. A Fever (such as made this Spectacle of Mortality) may quickly send us after him, who is lately gone unto the Grave: And what comes next?*

Pardon me, Reader, *if I vent my very Heart and Wishes in these borrow'd Strains:*

O Deus! aut nullo caleat mihi Pectus abigne:
Aut solo caleat pectus ab igne tui.
Languet ut illa Deo, mihi mens simul æmula languet!
Cœlitus ut rapitur! me violenta rapit.
Ut Paveam scelus omne, petam super omnia Cœlum;
Da mihi Frœna Timor, Da mihi Calcar Amor.

Luctibus Cætera & Suspiriis.

LONDON,
Jan. 15.
169¾.

Thine in and for the Lord,
Whilst Matt. Sylvester.

A

Funeral Sermon, &c.

A Funeral Solemnity (my Friends) is an awful Thing; apt to diſpoſe the Minds of thoſe who are in any wiſe Thoughtful for Serious Impreſſions: and therefore affords an Opportunity for purſuing an Exhortation to Piety and Religion, with good Advantage.

Though *Funeral Orations* had their Riſe from Heatheniſh Vanity, yet may they (provided all unjuſt Commendation of the Dead, and ſervile Flattery of the Living, be avoided) be exceeding uſeful, even among Chriſtians, in helping to make the Survivers better; there being nothing that more promotes the Amendment of our Lives, than the ſerious Conſideration and Improvement of the Departure of Others, who are ſnatch'd away by Death, both on our Right-hand and Left, leaving us behind, who Our Selves alſo muſt ſhortly follow.

We have now before us the Corps of one, who, a Fortnight ago, might rationally have hop'd to have liv'd as long as moſt here preſent; One that a few Days ago was Hale and Strong, Healthful and Vigorous, Aimable and Pleaſant, Well-Accompliſh'd and Uſeful: But a mortal Diſtemper ſeiz'd him, his Strength was on a ſudden baffled, and all his Plenty of Spirits exhauſted; he is cruſh'd like a Moth, his Serviceableneſs is at an end; and we are now going to commit his deſented Carcaſs to the Earth, the grand Principle of its Compoſition. Who that will give way to Conſideration, but muſt hereupon be provok'd to take up ſome ſuch Reſolution as this? By the help of God, henceforward, whatever I neglect, I'll mind my main Concern; I'll do what I have to do in this World without Delay, ſince I know not how ſoon Death may ſurprize me, and ſummon me to Judgment? 'Tis the engaging us to make and keep ſuch a Reſolution as this, which (humbly imploring Divine Aſſiſtance) I at preſent aim at: And in order thereto, I have pitch'd, for the Subject of my Diſcourſe, on that Paſſage of Holy Writ which we meet with in

JOHN

JOHN ix. 4.

I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work.

WHich are the Words of our Blessed Saviour, ordinarily taken as spoken by him with reference to Himself, discovering his steady Purpose of managing that great Concern for which he came into the World with the utmost Speed and Diligence; and more particularly, his Resolvedness to do as many beneficial Miracles as the short time of his stay here below would allow him. But waving this Sence, I shall consider them as having a general Aspect; setting before us all that which is our plain Duty, and should be our resolved Purpose. For which Acceptation, (besides the Obligation we are under to a Resemblance of our Blessed Lord, in this, as well as in other Respects,) I think I have sufficient Ground, in that, according to one of the most valuable Copies * of the New Testament this day in the World, this Passage should be thus render'd, *We must work the Works of him that sent us.* And indeed, a transient Animadversion of the Circumstances of this Verse, will

* *Viz.* That of *Beza*, reserv'd at *Cambridge*

ſuffice to ſatisfie us, that it hath nothing in it peculiar to our Saviour; but that he took a convenient Occaſion to make his Followers ſenſible how much they were concern'd, according to their different Capacities, to do the Work that God had ſet them, in the Time that he had given them, which is ſhort, and very uncertain, and therefore carefully to be improv'd; and that he might inſinuate this the better, he brings Himſelf in for Company.

I ſhall not go about to try whether or no I could, on a Subject ſo circumſtantiated as this, give you a learned and florid Diſcourſe; but ſhall only endeavour to be a plain *Echo* of that Providence which is the ſad Occaſion of our preſent Concourſe, in laying before you, in diſtinct Propoſitions, the ſeveral Truths which theſe Words contain; of which I ſhall afterwards make a brief Improvement, both General and Special.

Now the Truths which theſe Words naturally preſent to our Thoughts, are ſuch as theſe that follow.

I. That we are all ſent into this World by God. We muſt work the Works of him *that ſent us*. We came not hither of our ſelves: We came not by Chance: Our Production's owing to an Agent infinitely Powerful and Wiſe; who though he

he did not immediately create us out of Nothing, yet order'd diſpos'd and actuated thoſe Natural Cauſes by whoſe Concurrence we were form'd.

One would wonder how any that have the leaſt ſpark of Reaſon, ſhould ever let it enter into their Thoughts, that ſo Noble a Being as *Man* ſhould be the Workmanſhip of fortuitous Chance, when we ſee Men riſing up in the World, Age after Age, in a ſtated Order. And as for that Term of NATURE, of which ſome are ſo fond, if they mean by it any thing diſtinct either from the Author, or the ſettled Order of Things, they introduce by it a Being of whoſe Exiſtence they can give no Evidence. But let our Wits argue as long as they pleaſe, we may ſecurely defie them to give any Account, how it ſhould come about, that when it was but a little while ago altogether Indifferent whether ſuch Beings ſhould ever have been, or not, one Generation ſhould now ſo ſtatedly ſucceed another; unleſs they'll own the Agency of the Great Creator of all Things, the free Efflux of whoſe ſuperabounding Goodneſs gave the firſt Riſe to the World.

'Tis He that manifeſtly gives Natural Cauſes their Vertue, ſets them on Work, bounds their Influence, determines their Effects, and over-rules and manages them in all their Productions. So that, as Things are now diſpoſed, we as much

owe

owe our Beings to God, as we should do, if, by virtue of his Almighty Word, we should in an instant start out of Nothing. 'Twas He that first shap'd us in the Womb; as we may see, *Psal.* 139. 14, 15, 16. 'Twas He that brought us out of our first strait Confinement, into so large and noble an Habitation as that of this Visible World, *Psal.* 71. 6. 'Tis on Him that we subsist all the time that we are here, and therefore we may be assur'd He sent us hither.

II. A *Second* Truth these Words afford, is this; That we have all of us Work to do here. And need I go to prove this to you? Do we not see all the Creatures, in their several Ranks, according to their Capacities, at work about us? Do we not find that we have Active Natures, Noble Powers, Large Capacities, and Boundless Cravings? And can we then think that we were design'd to be Idle? Should we indeed look into most Mens Lives, we should be apt to think either that we have nothing at all, or nothing of any Consequence to do in this World. But let's but look round about us, or into our selves, and we shall soon be satisfy'd that such active Natures as ours must have an Employment. A Wise Being can never produce Powers to no purpose; a Capacity, without setting it a work: We must have some Work

for

or other to do, or else we should be useless Impertinencies, and insignificant Cyphers in the Creation of God.

Neither can our Work be at our own Choice; we cannot be free to do what we please. It naturally belongs to Him that gave us our Powers, to employ them; to Him that sent us into the World, to allot and cut out proper Work for us in it: And whenever we pretend to cut out Work for our selves, we arrogate to our selves the Prerogative of our Maker; who being an infinitely Wise Agent, and having made us capable of Working, hath designed Work for us; and that such Work as is every way suitable to the Dignity, Excellency and Ability of our Natures.

Now it's well worth our serious Consideration, what Work it is God design'd us for. And this is a Thought which the greatest Part of the World seldom, if ever to any purpose, harbour; and therefore 'tis no wonder that their Lives are so disorderly, confus'd, and unaccountably extravagant and foolish. I doubt not but there are some Hundreds and Thousands to be found, who never spent one half Hour, in all their Lives, in deliberate Thoughtfulness about the Work for which they were made, and sent into the World. For, can any Man, who will allow himself soberly

ſoberly to weigh Matters, ever think that ſo Noble a Creature as *he* ſhould have no other Work in this World, than to build Houſes, and plant Vineyards; take his Pleaſure, and live at his Eaſe, indulging his Appetites, gratifying his Senſes, and pampering a ſhort-liv'd Body? to prog for Wealth, and weary himſelf in heaping together a few Bags of periſhing Duſt? to hunt for Honour and Credit, Eſteem and Applauſe among his Fellow-Creatures, together with whom he himſelf muſt ſhortly paſs off this earthly Stage, ſo as to be quite forgotten? Can any One, I ſay, that will give himſelf leave to think, imagine this to be Work fit for ſo Noble a Creature as *Man* to be ſent into this World for? And yet of how great a Part of Mankind, in all Ages, hath this been the ſole Employment! Oh, for God's ſake! let us be wiſer: Let's but open our Eyes a little, and we ſhall ſoon diſcern quite otherguеſs Work than this for us to mind. Should I attempt here to be particular, I ſhould ſoon expatiate beyond the Bounds of a ſingle Diſcourſe: Let me deſire you therefore, in ſhort, to obſerve, that the Work which we have to do in this World, is either Common or Special.

The

The great Work that is common to us all, is, while we are in this World, to prepare for another; this Life not being in order to it self, but in order to a better Life. We are sent into this World to be prepar'd, qualify'd, dispos'd and fitted for the noble and refin'd Enjoyments of another State, for which we are design'd; to live a Life of Faith and Patience, that in due time we may be admitted to a Life of Glory.

And a greater Work this is than we are ordinarily aware of: But herein lies the main of it: We are to get our Spirits refin'd, and a New and a Divine Nature convey'd into us; without which, we can never be capable of a Divine Life. In order hereto, there's a great deal of Knowledge to be gotten: We must know the *God* that made us, and in the Enjoyment of whom our Happiness lies: we must know our Apostacy from him, with its sad Effects: we must know the Means of our Recovery, and use them. And here comes in *Jesus Christ*, whom we must know and use in all his Offices: We must know what He was by the Father design'd to do for us; what Advantages he hath procur'd us, and on what Terms. To which Terms we must take care to come up:

we muſt heartily return to God, through his Son; give up our ſelves to our Lord Redeemer's Conduct; obey the Laws that he hath given us; uſe all the ſubordinate Means that he hath appointed us; believe and truſt in the Promiſes that he hath made us; follow the Example that he hath ſet us; and depend on the Aſſiſtance of that *Spirit* which he hath purchaſed for us: We muſt be continually fighting againſt the three grand Enemies of our Happineſs, the Fleſh, the World and the Devil: we muſt improve all our Faculties, Talents, Abilities, Mercies, Relations, and Enjoyments, for God, like Accountable Creatures; and do all the Good we can to Others. This is the Work that lies upon all our hands: without doing which, we live in vain; we anſwer not the Ends of Life.

But beſides this General, there's Special Work to which God calls ſome. And this is either Ordinary or Extraordinary: and each of them is of ſeveral ſorts, which I ſhan't ſtay to enumerate: but among them all, there's none more Awful, Sacred and Tremendious, than the *Miniſterial Employment*; and none lie under a greater neceſſity of Diligence, Care and Induſtry; none ſtand in need of more Aſſiſtance from Above, than

than thoſe who are call'd to, and employ'd in it. That is a Work, indeed, in it ſelf, unfit for Humane Hands; and yet it muſt be undertaken and done when God calls to it: and his Goodneſs is wonderfully ſeen, in ſpiriting and fitting any mortal Men, in any tolerable Degree, for it; aſſiſting them in it, and carrying them through it. But 'tis but few who have a genuine Call to ſuch Work as this; nor are all fit to Judge of the Dueneſs of a Call to it: But to the former we are all Call'd, and we *muſt* do it; 'tis required of every one of us, by God that *ſent us* hither. And ſo much for the *Second* Obſervable.

III. The *Third* thing obſervable, is this; That God gives us a Day in which we may do our Work. *We muſt work the Works of him that ſent us, while it is Day.* Which implies, that we all have a Day to work in. God is not, in any caſe, like the Egyptian Task-maſters, who requir'd Bricks without Straw. He'll give us Time to do the Work he'll require at our hands.

The great Difficulty here, is, with reference to thoſe who die in Infancy, or at any time before they come to Years of Diſcretion. What Time,

we muſt heartily return to God, through his Son; give up our ſelves to our Lord Redeemer's Conduct; obey the Laws that he hath given us; uſe all the ſubordinate Means that he hath appointed us; believe and truſt in the Promiſes that he hath made us; follow the Example that he hath ſet us; and depend on the Aſſiſtance of that *Spirit* which he hath purchaſed for us: We muſt be continually fighting againſt the three grand Enemies of our Happineſs, the Fleſh, the World and the Devil: we muſt improve all our Faculties, Talents, Abilities, Mercies, Relations, and Enjoyments, for God, like Accountable Creatures; and do all the Good we can to Others. This is the Work that lies upon all our hands: without doing which, we live in vain; we anſwer not the Ends of Life.

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than those who are call'd to, and employ'd in it. That is a Work, indeed, in it self, unfit for Humane Hands; and yet it must be undertaken and done when God calls to it: and his Goodness is wonderfully seen, in spiriting and fitting any mortal Men, in any tolerable Degree, for it; assisting them in it, and carrying them through it. But 'tis but few who have a genuine Call to such Work as this; nor are all fit to Judge of the Dueness of a Call to it: But to the former we are all Call'd, and we *must* do it; 'tis required of every one of us, by God that *sent us* hither. And so much for the *Second* Observable.

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The great Difficulty here, is, with reference to those who die in Infancy, or at any time before they come to Years of Discretion. What Time,

may it be demanded, have ſuch as they to do any Work in? Whereto I reply, That God expects no Work of any ſort, of any, for which he gives not Time and Capacity.

As to the Eternal State of Dying Infants, if that be farther enquired into, we can ſay no more than this, That thoſe of them who ſprang from truly Pious Parents, are reckon'd as a Part of their Parents; and therefore their Parents right acquitting themſelves in the Work that God ſet them, is available for their Good. But as for thoſe of them whoſe Parents are Irreligious, who have not done the Work for which God ſent them into the World, the Scriptures give us no Account; and therefore we may and ſhould be content to be ignorant what becomes of them.

But as for us (my Friends) we have a Day afforded us; and therefore afforded, that we may Work in it. In whatſoever ſence we'll take the Day, we have it: we have Life prolong'd, Offers and Seaſons of Grace continued, God's Patience waiting, and his Spirit ſtriving: Some of us have had a long Day of it: We, bleſſed be God, have Time, and Health, and Strength; Oh! that we had Hearts to do our Work!

IV. A *Fourth* Obſervation is this; That this Day of ours is but ſhort. *We muſt Work while it is Day.* That implies it won't laſt long. Which, it's manifeſt, is principally meant of the Time of Life, which is but ſhort.

And this is a common Theme of Complaint with ſome; yet as much Forgotten and Overlook'd by others, as if they did not believe it. How mournfully ſhall we hear ſome complain, that we no ſooner paſs through helpleſs Infancy, and inobſervant Childhood, and come, after much Pains and Toil, to get ſome tolerable Fitneſs for Service in the World, but we are preſently gone; our Days at an end? And yet how carelesly and negligently do the moſt live? juſt as if they thought their Day would laſt always?

But what little Reaſon is there for the former Complaint, when our Day ſuffices for our Work? And how unaccountable is the latter Inſtance of Folly, when our Day, if prolong'd to the utmoſt Period, is ſo exceeding ſhort? If we'll but look into Scripture, we ſhall ſee things brought in as Emblems of it, that are the moſt ſhort, brittle and fading, that the whole Creation can furniſh.

Let's

Let's conſult the Experience of Mankind, in all Ages, and ſee if our Working-time be not ſhort. How eaſily may a Man, when the Sun Riſes in the Morning, fore-ſee its Setting, when the Light will be ſucceeded by Darkneſs, the Day by Night? As eaſily may we, while in Health, and Strength, and Vigour, fore-ſee an approaching Death. How ſhort is our Day, compar'd with the Days of Eternity? even infinitely leſs than a ſingle Moment, compar'd with the whole World's Duration. Nay, what is our Day now, to that of thoſe who liv'd in the firſt Ages of the World, but as a ſhort Dream, compar'd to a long Summer's Day? This Point were eaſily illuſtrated and prov'd; but it needs neither, ſo much as Improvement. And ſo doth,

V. The *Fifth* Obſervable, which is this; That our Day is not only Short, but Uncertain. For thus much that Paſſage alſo implies, *We muſt work while it is Day.* Which ſeems to intimate, that it may, for ought we know, laſt but a very little while; it may expire e're we are aware.

And can there be any thing more evident than this? when ſo many Thouſands of unforeſeen Caſualties,

Caſualties, Diſorders or Diſtempers may put an end to it? Let's look abroad into the World, and we ſhall find ſome of all Ages daily Dying. Who then can tell at what Age his Day may end? at what time his Sun may ſet? I need look no further for a ſenſible Conviction of this, than the *Corps* before us; the Looking on which, may (and will, if we conſider Circumſtances) ſatisfie us all that our Day's uncertain. But yet,

VI. In the *Sixth* and Laſt place, though that be Uncertain, this is moſt Certain, That a Night will, ſooner or later, overtake us all, in which no Work can be done, but we muſt receive our Wages.

Let our Day be never ſo bright and clear, ſome time or other the Shadows of the Evening will overſpread us; our Sun will ſet, and Night will come; a Night *in which no man can work*. After which, nothing more can be done, in order to a Preparation for Happineſs, or an Eſcape of Miſery; in which no more Means can be us'd, in order to our Amendment; no more Knowledge can be gotten, that can do us any Good: after which, no further Opportunity will be afforded us of repairing to,

and

and making use of Christ; and no further Time of Trial allow'd us. Which is as certain, Heb. 9. 27. as 'tis, that *'tis appointed to all men once to die*; of which we may be as certain as we are, that now we live.

The Day's our Working-time; when the Night comes, we must expect to receive our Wages. Thus we find it was in the Parable of the *Labourers*, recorded in the Twentieth Chapter of St. *Matthew*'s Gospel, and thus 'twill be with us.

When God hath waited upon us, and given us as long a Day as he thinks fit, he'll then call us to an Account, what Work we have done; how we have behav'd our selves.

If we have done the Work for which God sent us hither, he'll Commend and highly Reward us. If we have not done it, his very Look will strike us through with Terrour, and he'll severely punish us: For he *will render to every one according to their Works*. As you may see more at large, if you please to consult *Rom.* 2. 6, and the following Verses.

And

And thus much may ſuffice for the Doctrinal handling of the Words; the Improvement follows: which might be manag'd to good purpoſe ſeveral ways: But that I may keep within bounds, I'le reduce what I would ſay for general Improvement to theſe two Heads.

If theſe things be ſo, then certainly it becomes us all,

1. To improve the day we have to work in to the beſt advantage.
2. Often to think of, and ſeriouſly to prepare for an approaching night.

1. Then, *Let us manage and improve the day we have to work in, to the beſt advantage that may be.*

I'm ſatisfy'd there's ſcarce any one among us all, but if ask'd, would ſay, that we heartily believ'd the forementioned Truths: that but who almoſt lookt into our Lives could believe us w hen we ſay ſo? Should we every one of us ſet our ſelves down ſeriouſly to examine what we have done of the work that we were ſent into the world for (to do which would be a great inſtance of our wiſdom), what a poor account ſhould we bring in! How much of our day have we ſpent in do-

ing nothing! how much in that which comes to nothing! Nay, how much have many of us ſpent in that which muſt, ſo far as it's poſſible, be undone again; or elſe we are eternally miſerable! How many of us have liv'd the half; nay, two thirds; nay, almoſt the whole of our day, and are yet to begin our great Work? To what purpoſe then, I pray, have we liv'd all this while! And as for thoſe of us who have in earneſt begun our work, how little of it have we done? how is it done, as 'twere by halves? How little proportion doth our Diligence, and Induſtry, and Activity in it, bear to the momentouſneſs and greatneſs of it, to the aſſiſtances we have, and the uncertainty we are at? And ſhall we then refuſe to think theſe things over again in our Secret Retirements? and endeavour, by conſideration, to drive them home into our Souls, till all the Powers we have, are awakened to the earneſt doing of the Work of him that ſent us, while the Day laſts, before the Night over-takes us? Is our working Day ſo ſhort, and can we then find any of it to loſe? Is it ſo uncertain, and ſhall we dare to delay? Oh, if we have any ſober Reaſon left, if we are not perfectly mad, beſotted, and ſtupify'd; if we would not in another State fruitleſly torment our ſelves for ever, let us improve our working time to the beſt advantage.

That

That we may ſo do, let us,

1. Begin to work betimes; Which if we could be prevail'd upon to do it, would bring unſpeakable advantages with it. Oh, let none of us who think not our ſelves too young to live, or too young to die, think our ſelves too young to do that work for which we were ſent into the world. The ſooner we begin to work, the more eaſe and peace may we expect in our remaining days, and the more work may we hope to do. If we'll begin to work in our youthful days, and hold on working, we may hope by the Divine Bleſſing to do Three times as much work as thoſe, who, tho' they ſhould live as long as we, yet ſpend a third part of their day idly, without any ways anſwering the Ends of Life: And we might expect an increaſe of our Reward hereafter, proportionable to the increaſe of our work here. Night may overtake the youngeſt of us, and therefore we have Reaſon to go to work out of hand. And the more advanc'd any of us are in years, ſtill the more Reaſon have we immediately to begin it, if we have not already done it. A delay in this caſe is *dangerous*, and may be our Ruin. O let's therefore be idle no longer, but *work the Work of him that ſent us while it's day.*

2. Let us carefully avoid all thoſe things that would hinder us in our Work. The Weakneſs and Neceſſities of our Natures, in our preſent State, occaſion a great many unavoidable Avocations from our great Work. Much of our ſhort day's cut off by Infancy, when we can do nothing; and Childhood, when we are at moſt capable but of juſt beginning our Work; By the time that muſt be ſpent in eating, and drinking, and ſleeping, for the Recruit and ſupport of our Bodies, and in Recreation that's needful for our Health and Refreſhment; and a great many other things I might mention, which tho ſubordinate duties, yet are avocations from that great Work we were made for. We have no need therefore to be in love with Clogs, Impediments, and Embarraſments, as too too many ſeem to be. Let's rather prudently endeavour to avoid them: if we have any, let's as much as may be lay them aſide: Let's watch and ſtrive againſt all the Encroachments they would make upon that time which ought to be ſpent in our great Work, like thoſe that are in earneſt for Heaven and another World. And,

3. *Thirdly* and *Laſtly*, Let us work apace, and do as much Work as ever we can in ſo *ſhort* and *uncertain a time* as we have to do it in. Our *Day* ha-

haſtens, and ſo let *our Work*. *Whatever our hand finds to do, let's do it with our might*; as the Wiſe Man expreſſes it, *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. Were our day as long as *Methuſalah*'s, our work is ſuch that we ſhould have no time to loſe. But when it is ſo *ſhort* and *uncertain*, and we have ſuch *great* and *important Work* to do, we had need double our diligence; and if we'll take this courſe, we ſhall have no Reaſon to complain of the *Shortneſs of our Lives*; for he that does the work of Fifty or Threeſcore Years in Seven or Eight and Twenty, is happier than he that lives ſo long in the world. Oh, let's earneſtly endeavour to make ſuch daily advances, as that our *Work* may be at an End as ſoon as *our Day*.

2. Let us often think of, and ſeriouſly ſet our ſelves to *prepare for an approaching Night*. We are all (*my Friends*) endued with a *Power of Foreſight*; Let's in this caſe make uſe of it: Let's think with our ſelves, that as ſurely as 'tis now Day with us, 'twill e're long be Night; as ſurely as we now live ſhall we ſhortly die; and let's endeavour to yield to the Power of ſuch a Thought. Whenever we are tempted to Delays, to Negligence, Indifference and Remiſsneſs in our *Grand Concern*; Let's think how ſwiftly the Night is haſting towards us, and how earneſtly Death is

pur-

purſuing after us; and let's act as thoſe that are in expectation of it. Let's reſolve with holy *Job*, that we'll *wait all the days of our appointed time, till our change come*, Job 14. 14. Let's not be ſo fooliſh as to hear of others Deaths, without reflecting on our own: To accompany others to their graves, without thinking that we muſt ſhortly follow them. Let's Live in the day time as thoſe that have night in their view. When the labouring Countreyman ſees the night approaching, he'l put to all his ſtrength, and vigorouſly endeavour to finiſh his undertaken work ere the ſun go down: Let us do ſo too; and then be our day longer or ſhorter, our Night will be comfortable; We may lift up our Heads with joy. But on the contrary how doleful will our night be if we work not in the day time! How diſmal a thing will it be at the cloſe of our Lives to find juſt cauſe for this Reflection, that we have liv'd in vain, without doing that for which God ſent us hither! What Horror and Amazement will then ſeize upon us! What can we then expect will ſupport or cheer us! What Rage and Deſpair will poſſeſs us! Would we not have this to be our caſe? Then let us by doing our work in the Day, prepare for the Night that's coming. And Oh what account ſhall we be able to give to the God that ſent us hither, if we mind not the

the *Work* for which he ſent us? If we can find time now for *every thing elſe* but to mind *our main Concern*, how ſhall we dare to look God in the Face another day? How can we think we ſtand before his *Bar*, to give an account for all *our Power* and *Capacity*, *Time* and *Opportunity of Working*; for our Calls, Admonitions and warnings to apply our ſelves to our work, for all our allurements and enticements, Helps and aſſiſtances to work? Oh how ſhall we then ſtand ſpeechleſs if now we remain idle! Then be confounded if now we are negligent! Oh then if we love our ſelves, if we deſire to be Happy, Let us by doing the work of him that ſent us while the day laſts, prepare for that night which approaches, in which no work can be done, but we muſt receive our Wages. And thus much may ſuffice for *general Improvements*.

And now that I may follow this *preſent Stroke of Providence*, whither it ſeems more particularly to direct its Voice, give me leave to addreſs my ſelf to you, my Brethren, of the *Younger Sort*, whom God is pleaſed to call to *publick Work* in his *Vineyard*.

One of our ſmall Number's gone. and he none of the *inconſiderableſt* neither. God ſet him a Work for a little while, and then call'd him away;

way ; and hath not this a Voice, and that to us particularly ? Our Deceaſed brother, and God by him ſeems to cry aloud to all of us, to work the works of him that ſent us while 'tis day, ere the night overtake us.

The work, my brethren, to which we have ſet our hands is ſacred and awful ; 'Tis enough, I profeſs ſeriouſly, to make our hearts to ake, and our Knees to tremble, to ſet our ſelves ſolemnly to think upon it. 'Tis difficult work : Difficult in it ſelf, and more peculiarly ſo, by reaſon of the circumſtances of the time wherein our Lot is caſt. It hath ever indeed been difficult to bear up Gods honour in the world, to vindicate his truths from contempt, to engage men heartily in his ſervice, and to bring Souls to *Heaven* : But how are the difficulties encreaſed upon us, thro' the deſperate malignity of many, the Lukewarmneſs and indifference of moſt ; The peeviſhneſs and moroſneſs of ſome, and the Giddineſs and wantonneſs of others ! Alas for us, what ſhall we do to promote *that Wiſdom that is from above, that is pure, and peaceable, and gentle, and eaſy to be entreated, full of good fruits, without partiality and without Hypocriſy*, in the Age we live in, in which the wiſdom of the world ſo much prevails, and true Religion is ſo like to *expire* ? 'Tis true, *Our Reverend Fathers*, thanks be to God, do as yet

Jam. 3. 17.

bear

bear the Brunt of the Day; and God grant they may long do ſo. But alas, the Prophets dont live for ever, any more than others; Within a few years they'll all drop off, and the burthen will lie on young ſhoulders: And what ſhall we then do? What ſhall we do to ſtem that Tide of Atheiſm and Irreligion, that hath overflown us? What ſhall we do in oppoſition to the Scepticiſm by which we find ſo many unravell'd and undone? What ſhall we do to recover the Power of Godlineſs, of which our Fathers tell us ſo much, tho we can ſee ſo little, it being almoſt loſt? What ſhall we do to root out thoſe Prejudices which have ſo long been rivetted in many peoples minds? What ſhall we do to pacifie thoſe angry Heats, and ſtop thoſe raging Contentions vvhich have continued ſo long, till they have almoſt eat out the Spirit and Life of Religion? What ſhall *we* do to revive True, Generous, Catholick Chriſtianity? Our Difficulties ſeem rather to *grow* than *diminiſh*: And ſhall *we* not then, out of a ſenſe of the great oppoſition *we* ſhall meet with on all ſides, take great care to qualifie, diſpoſe and fit our ſelves for the *Great Work that will lie upon us*, by treaſuring up of *Knowledge* daily, laying aſide of Prejudices our ſelves, and taking up nothing but upon good Grounds, by ſtudying the things that make for Peace on all hands, by arming our

ſelves vvith reſolution to go through good report and bad report, to be above *Smiles* and *Frowns*; and above all, by keeping up an intimate Acquaintance vvith that God vvho gives us a Commiſſion, and vvho alone can give us aſſiſtance and ſucceſs? And yet in the mean time the *Day we have to work in* is ſhort and uncertain; We *know not* but our Work may be at an end as ſoon almoſt as *we* begin; and therefore *we* have need carefully to improve all opportunities of Service, and to *work apace*. It is indeed enough to ſurprize us, vvhen *we* conſider all things, to think that God ſhould have rais'd up ſo many of us in ſo diſcouraging Times as *we* have paſs'd through; that he ſhould have given us any tolerable competency of Fitneſs for his Service, and that he ſhould in any meaſure *own us* in it. But alas, my Brethren, let's not be too confident; God can nip budding hopes; he can, if he pleaſes, *juſt ſhow us to the World*, and then *ſnatch us away again*. Let's take care leſt *we* by our ſins, provoke him to lay us aſide, as *Veſſels wherein he hath no pleaſure*. Let's *work* therefore for *God, without Self-ſeeking*: Let's take care to recommend Religion to others by our Lives: Let's love as Brethren, and ſtudiouſly *ſtrengthen*, and *no ways weaken* one anothers hands: Let's apply our ſelves diligently to our Work, and let this Inſtance of our Mortality quicken us: Let's often

think

think this Work of ours *will ſoon be at an end*; in *which*, if *we* have been faithful, *we ſhall be amply rewarded*; for *we ſhall ſhine as Stars in God's Right Hand.* If *we* have been idle, negligent and careleſs, our puniſhment vvill be proportion'd to our ſin. Let's not be ſo fond as to feed our ſelves *with hopes* of a long time of uſe and ſervice to come; but in the Day let's foreſee our Night: Let's ſeriouſly bethink our ſelves that *Death will ſoon ſeize us*, and ſummon us to Judgment; Our *Souls will take their flight*, and *leave our Bodies behind*; and *we* muſt be beholden to our ſurviving Friends to do that laſt Office for us *which we are now going to do* for the Relicks of our Deceaſed Brother, Mr. *SAMUEL STEPHENS.*

Of *whom* I ſhan't ſay much to you, though I could, if I thought it needful. As for his Family, 'tvvas Noble and *H*onourable in *Heavens Blazonry*, it having been ſucceſſively employed in the Work of the Miniſtry ever ſince the Reformation, his immediate Father only excepted; Which Gap the *Two Brothers would have made up*, if both had liv'd: But bleſſed be God that hath ſpared us One Branch of ſo Worthy a Stock. As for the Perſon of the Deceaſed, *he was deſign'd for the Miniſtry* from his Younger Years; and had as Good Advantages all along, for the acquiring

the needful Accompliſhments for it, as this Land vvould afford to thoſe under our Diſcouragements. Which *Advantages* he ſo Well Improv'd, as at length to become a Workman that needed not to be aſham'd. *He* had a Senſe of *Religion* inſtill'd into him in his early Days, about the Fourteenth or Fifteenth Year of his *Age*; ever ſince *which time* he hath been obſerved, by thoſe that *knew him*, to have had a very tender Conſcience. *He* vvas noted for his frequency in Prayer, even *while a School-Boy*, the ſerious performance of *which Duty* argues the Greateſt Love to God of any. *He* had a moſt *awful Senſe* of the Miniſterial Employment, which thoſe with whom he had any *intimacy*, will readily teſtifie. *He* was very backward to begin to preach, though by his moſt *Judicious Friends*, judg'd ſufficiently qualified, and earneſtly preſt: thro' his great humility, and *unwillingneſs* to ruſh into ſuch a work. And I could tell you of a Worthy Divine, to whom he to his dying day, us'd for the moſt part to read his *Notes*, before he'd Venture with Them *into the Pulpit*. *His Spirit* hath many a Time been ſo over-awed by a ſenſe of *the Sacredneſs* of the Work he was engaged in, that he hath been afraid to perſiſt in it, and almoſt perſwaded *to turn his Thoughts another way*. And indeed he was humble and modeſt to a Fault. *His Natural Temper* expoſed him ſomewhat to Melancholy;

lancholy; and one thing that tended to make *his Life uneaſie*, was his great *Scrupuloſity*, and fear of offending God in *the ſmalleſt matters*, where *others* could apprehend no danger. But in *this* he was on *the ſafeſt ſide*, tho *the moſt uncomfortable*. But he had *the happineſs* to be able to conceal *his inward Trouble* from *the Obſervation of the World*, by a free, pleaſant and cheerful Converſation, by which he avoided diſcouraging *others*, of which *he was fearful*. I look upon him to have had as much of True Generoſity in *his Natural Temper*, as moſt I know. *He*, from *his heart*, ſcorn'd to do any Thing that was mean, or baſe, or ſervile; and abhorr'd every Thing that in the leaſt lookt like undermining.

He ever retain'd a moſt *grateful ſenſe of the Kindneſs* of *thoſe Worthy Gentlemen*, and *others*, who were *his Friends*; and was *always* ready, to the *utmoſt of his Capacity*, himſelf, to do any Office of Kindneſs for any.

Having been for ſome years employ'd occaſionally in *the Preaching Work of the Miniſtry*, it ſo pleaſed God, that a Mortal Diſtemper ſeiz'd him, which depriv'd the *Church* of an uſeful Servant, and *us* of a Fellow-Labourer, that might have been very helpful. *His* Diſtemper with Violence ſeiz'd *his head*, the Rage whereof was Viſibly increaſed by thoſe awful *Thoughts of Eternity* where-

with

with he was poſſeſſed. I mention *this*, the rather, that I may thence take occaſion to warn thoſe who will defer, and put off *their great work* to a Dying Bed, from this Inſtance, and others of the like *nature*, often to be met with, to ſee their folly, and grow wiſe. For ſeveral days before he dy'd, his Diſtemper deprived him of *the free uſe of his Reaſon*; and ſo it happens in many Caſes: who then, *in his Wits*, would put off the *Great Work* he *was ſent into the World for*, to ſuch a Time? And yet this may be the caſe of any one of *us*. Our *Eternal State* may be irrevocably fixt even before we die, and we *abſolutely incapacitated* to do any thing in our Soul-Affairs. But I hope and believe our deceaſed *Brother*'s Work was *not then to do*, but was finiſhed before.

After that *his Natural Strength* (which *was very great*) had for ſome days grappled with a *malignant Fever*, he was forc'd to yield, a Rent was made, *his Soul took its flight*, and left his Body lifeleſs, in *the Eight and Twentieth Year of his Age*. *His* Work's ſoon done, but not too ſoon for him, who I hope is happy. We are now going *to commit his Body to the Earth*, there to lye and *rot*, which will *ſhortly* alſo be *the Caſe* of every one of *us*. *His* Toil, and Warfare, and Combat, and all painful Work *is at an end*. He's taken away from thoſe *Evils* which we may live to ſee. For who knows

what

what is coming upon us? We may, for ought we know, *meet with miseries that we little think of*, before we dye: But blessed be God *that we have another Life*, of *Rest*, and *Peace*, and *Joy*, in hope, and that tho we cant know *what will befall us here*, yet we know *this* assuredly, That *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their Works do follow them.* Rev 14.13.

FINIS.

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